

Arizona's Current State of Health Information Exchange

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Currently, several independent HIE efforts are active in the state of Arizona. These efforts include organizations that would be classified as HIOs as well as exchange activities by groups that would not be viewed as HIOs. Many of these efforts have been in various stages of planning, development, or production for several years.

Health Information Organizations within Arizona include the Arizona Medical Information Exchange (AMIE), the Southern Arizona Health Information Exchange (SAHIE), and the Community Access Partnership of Arizona and Mexico (CAPAZ-MEX). All of these efforts are at least two years old and represent the work of significant numbers of stakeholders.

The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), the state's Medicaid agency, developed AMIE with Medicaid Transformation Grant funds. The exchange is built on the open-source, MA-SHARE software with significant enhancements by the AMIE project team. AMIE currently provides a viewer to clinicians, which utilizes a record locator service and master patient index. AMIE exchanges information from Banner Health, Maricopa Integrated Health System, St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, and Sonora Quest Laboratories along with aggregated medication histories from Medicaid pharmacy benefit managers. As of September 4, 2009, over 6.1 million records from 2.7 million unique patients were available through AMIE. The organizations participating in the AMIE project formed a non-profit organization in 2009 transitioning the effort from an AHCCCS project to a stakeholder led organization.

SAHIE began as a community initiative in 2005. It is a non-profit organization initially focused on exchange of health information between providers in several Southern Arizona counties. The SAHIE board consists of 10 Institutional Directors (from organizations funding the exchange) and 5 Community Directors. The SAHIE bylaws ensure that the board and its committees remain receptive to community needs while simultaneously respecting the business interests of the organization as a whole. On October 9, 2009, SAHIE signed a contract with Wellogic to provide the exchange functionality for the effort.

CAPAZ-MEX, the third HIO effort in Arizona, is a project of the Regional Center for Border Health in Yuma County, Arizona. This project is working to address needs of uninsured and underinsured that routinely receive medical care on both sides of the US-Mexico border. Information is exchanged by the use of Continuity of Care Records (CCRs) in a central repository.

Although these efforts have begun separately and have been maturing without significant coordination across projects, the organizations involved in these efforts recognize the need to work together. To facilitate this collaboration, Arizona Health-e Connection (AzHeC) has created a forum with its Council of Initiatives for these organizations to share experiences and promote legal, policy and technology approaches that will foster sharing and interoperability within the state.

In addition to the HIOs operating in Arizona, several other exchange efforts are being actively pursued within the state. These activities consist mainly of provider organizations that are seeking solutions to health information exchange outside of the several early HIO initiatives in the state.

Scottsdale Healthcare is a healthcare system consisting of three hospital campuses, outpatient services, home healthcare services, and a wide range of community healthcare outreach and education programs. Approximately 6,700 staff members and physicians representing 50 specialties comprise the Scottsdale Healthcare network. In 2009, Scottsdale Healthcare implemented information exchange functionality using RelayHealth, completing and integrating with their existing inpatient McKesson EHR. Non-owned (affiliated) physician offices utilize this system for electronic eligibility checks, electronic claims submission, electronic prescribing, medication history access, lab results delivery, and access to discharge summaries, history and physical reports, radiology reports, and other documentation. Patients currently have access to a personal health record, and the ability to do electronic refill requests. Lab orders, public health reporting, production and sharing of a clinical summary (CCD C32), and quality reporting are in development and

scheduled for 2010 implementation. Prescription fill status functionality is planned, and available from the vendor is 2011. NHIN interoperability has been displayed by RelayHealth at the NHIN Connection demonstration in the summer of 2009, and there are plans to make the NHIN connectivity available to users of the RelayHealth system. Though not officially an HIO, Scottsdale Healthcare has a broad board representing the community, and affiliated clinicians and patients appear to be serviced by a system capable of meeting the estimated meaningful use requirements.

Catholic Healthcare West (CHW) is the eighth largest hospital system in the United States, serving patients in California, Nevada, and Arizona. CHW has broad experience interfacing with health information organizations in California, including the Santa Cruz RHIO and the Santa Barbara County Care Data Exchange. The hospital system is currently participating in the Arizona Medical Information Exchange (AMIE) through its St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix. In addition, CHW is using its health information exchange and connectivity solutions to deliver laboratory results and transcribed reports from several of its hospitals to affiliated physicians. There are plans to expand this functionality throughout the system's three-state area, and to add new functionality, such as linking to/from/between disparate EHR systems and transmitting the Continuity of Care Record (CCR) and Continuity of Care Document (CCD). CHW is also investigating an interface with the Nationwide Health Information Network (NHIN).

In addition to the projects at Scottsdale Healthcare and CHW, similar initiatives are underway at Kingman Regional Medical Center, the Cochise Health Network, and Verde Valley Guidance Clinic.

In an informal survey of exchange efforts in the state, AzHeC asked about the organizations' plans with regard to specific functionality. This functionality included eligibility, claims, e-prescribing, medication refill requests, laboratory results, laboratory orders, public health reporting, quality reporting, prescription fill status, medication history, clinical summary, other clinical documents and NHIN connection. The respondents of the survey indicated that virtually all of these functions are within the scope of their plans and a significant number of functions are either in production or planned to be in production in the near future.

AzHeC is also actively exploring different architectural frameworks to support the Arizona HIE, including grid computing, and health record banking.

For example, in early August 2009, AzHeC brought together Arizona HIE stakeholders (including HIOs and universities) to have an initial presentation of the National Coalition for Health Integration (NCHI) grid platform and vision, and to discuss possible pilots or collaboration. In parallel, AMIE is exploring a pilot with this technology at one hospital, while AzHeC has formed an ad hoc committee to provide technical and business feedback on the platform, and recommend future Arizona direction relative to an architectural platform. Thus far, initial feedback shows that the NCHI platform has promise, and is at a stage where multiple states may provide input and technical guidance to enable its maturation into a more robust solution. AzHeC plans to incorporate exploration of other architectural frameworks, and if the evaluation of the grid computing architecture is positive, will include NCHI in strategic and implementation recommendations in Arizona's Strategic Plan and Operational Plan produced under this cooperative agreement.

The concept of health record banking has also spawned a great deal of interest in Arizona, due to its simple and effective architecture, and solution for the legal sharing of information by putting consumer in control of their personal health information. eHealthTrust, a partnership formed by Dr. William Yasnoff, plans to start a health record bank in the Phoenix area, and is in discussions with several organizations, including AzHeC, regarding a community governance. AzHeC is also establishing an ad hoc committee to review this opportunity.